

# Got Skills?

## Identifying Your Skills

by Lisa Nicholson

**M**any people feel uncomfortable talking about what they do well. When it comes to looking for a job, it's OK (even necessary) to "boast" about your unique skills and qualifications. Employers want to know why they should hire you. Like most people, you have skills that set you apart and make you valuable to employers.

Identifying your skills is a crucial step toward new employment. You need to know your skills to successfully complete an application, write a resume, and answer interview questions. When presenting your skills to an employer, you need to be prepared to tell where, when, and how you used those skills.



## What Are Skills?

A skill is a thing you know how to do, right now. Everyone has dozens of skills that employers are looking for. Yet most people can only identify a few skills and are often unable to describe them to an employer. Employers need to hear what you can do. If you were purchasing a product that would cost you thousands of dollars for many years, you would want to know that. Don't approach employers until you can clearly and specifically tell them what you can accomplish. The more skills you have identified, the easier it will be to convince a potential employer that you have what it takes to be successful.

# Three Categories of Skills

<u>Job Content Skills</u>	<u>Self-Management Skills</u>	<u>Transferable Skills</u>
<p>These skills are necessary to perform the specific duties of a job. But job skills aren't always learned from employment. You may have developed job skills through education, home economics, parenting, hobbies, community activities, and life experiences.</p>	<p>These "people" skills are used every day to get along with others - like sincerity, reliability, tactfulness, flexibility, etc. Employers put enormous importance on these skills, and look for them in applicants as evidence of how they will "fit" into the organization.</p>	<p>These are either self-management or job content skills that can transfer from one job to another. Since it is unlikely that you will find a job that is identical to your previous job, you need to carefully evaluate how your skills transfer into other opportunities and include these on your list.</p>

Transferable Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to work well with others</li> <li>• Stress management</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Ability to think creatively &amp; critically</li> <li>• Reading, writing and speaking</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic decision making</li> <li>• Finding information &amp; resources</li> <li>• Ability to reason &amp; use basic logic</li> <li>• Ability to learn from mistakes</li> <li>• Ability to anticipate problems</li> <li>• Ability to plan &amp; prioritize</li> </ul>

## Listing your Skills

Identifying, listing and describing your skills is critical to a successful job search, so plan to invest the time it requires. The easiest way to identify your skills is to use either the computer program CHOICES (available at any DWS employment center) or the "skills search" feature at the O\*NET website:

[http://online.onetcenter.org/gen\\_skills\\_page](http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_skills_page).

Another way is to follow these steps:

1. List by title any jobs you have held.
2. Write a detailed description of four to five major duties for each job.
3. List all the skills needed to accomplish each duty. Remember to look for both job content and self-management skills. Be sure to include computer programs used, machines & tools operated, knowledge applied, etc.
4. Use this same process for other work-related activities including hobbies, volunteer work, and community experience. Select those skills that match your job goals.

## On The Web

<http://online.onetcenter.org/>

<http://www.hotworkforce.com/Identifyskills.html>

<http://members.rogers.com/mshie895IdentifyingYourSkills.htm>